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SUBJECT: DELHI DIARY, DECEMBER 3-7

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1D. 2006 NEW DELHI 08344

11. (U) Below is a compilation of political highlights from Embassy New Delhi for December 3-7, 2007 that did not feature in our other reporting, including:

-- Delhi Police on Terror Alert

-- Babri Masjid: Continues to Cast Shadow

-- India Conducts New Missile Defense Tests.

-- Minor Demonstration Against Pakistani High Commission

Delhi Police on Terror Alert

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12. (SBU) All major newspapers ran front page articles December 4 on the Delhi Police going into high alert following an Intelligence Bureau (IB) advisory warning of a possible terrorist attack in Delhi during the next two weeks. The likely terrorist outfits mentioned in the news reports are Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad and Harkat-ul-Jihad-e-Islam, all of which have been linked to previous terrorist attacks within India. A spokesman for Delhi Police acknowledged that the police have stepped up security measures at courts, crowded public places and high value targets. He noted that the police had deployed dog squads, bomb disposal units and quick reaction teams at strategic locations and are keeping a close eye on the capital city's borders with neighboring states. Security has also been reinforced at police and paramilitary targets and temple compounds.

13. (SBU) The latest terrorist warning comes about one week after a series of bomb blasts at courthouses in three Uttar Pradesh (UP) cities (Ref B). Minutes before the first UP court bombing on November 23, media outlets received an email warning about the UP attacks. That email also carried a threat of attacks against Delhi police. The latest IB warning apparently is broader, covering all likely terrorist targets instead of only courthouses and police and paramilitary compounds. The Delhi Police are also nervous because December 6 is the anniversary of the Babri Masjid destruction. RSO New Delhi notes that while the Delhi police are telling the public not to panic they are taking this threat seriously. Embassy convened an EAC meeting on December 5 and reported more fully on the security aspects of

this issue (Ref A).

#### Babri Masjid Continues to Cast Shadow

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**¶4.** (U) Although some of the emotion has dimmed, the 15-year old Babri Masjid destruction remains provocative and continues to find its way into political debate in India. On the event,s December 6 anniversary, there were noisy scenes in both houses of parliament as members demanded punishment for perpetrators of the Babri Masjid demolition. The Left parties were joined by the Samajwadi Party and the Telegu Desam Party in leading the protests in parliament. Bharatiya Janata Party members tried to deflect the attack by countering with its catigating the CPM over its actions in Nandigram (Ref C). Both houses adjourned for the day due to the uproar on the floor.

**¶5.** (U) Half a dozen groups organized protests and took out demonstration at Jantar Mantar, the designated central Delhi location for political protests. Delhi Police quickly quelled a few physical clashes that broke out between small numbers of Shiv Sena activists and some Muslim organizations. A television station aired a story about the discovery of five crude bombs at a courthouse in Rae Bareli, Uttar Pradesh, as police continued to tighten security at sensitive locations in the state.

#### India Conducts New Missile Defense Tests.

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**¶6.** (U) The GOI has claimed success in two tests of a new missile defense weapon system it conducted on December 2 and

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6 in the Bay of Bengal. Both tests involved a mock "enemy missile," a modified, indigenously designed Prithvi missile, launched over the Bay of Bengal, and an interceptor missile, launched within minutes in an attempt to intercept the target missile. India,s missile defense (MD) system is led by Dr. Saraswat of the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO), who told reporters that the December 6 missile test successfully destroyed the target missile. The interceptor missile did not physically meet the target missile but used a proximity fuse to destroy both missiles when it reached within a few hundred meters of the target missile,s trajectory. DRDO reportedly conducted these latest tests to validate an "endo-atmospheric" MD system, designed to knock out enemy missiles while they are within 30km of the earth,s surface. In November 2006 DRDO tested an "exo-atmospheric" MD system, launching an interceptor missile that reportedly destroyed a target missile at a higher altitude, approximately 50km above the earth,s surface (Ref D). DRDO used modified Prithvi missiles for both interceptor and target vehicles in the 2006 tests and for the target vehicle in the latest tests, but reportedly deployed a new missile design for the latest interceptor vehicle, described in the media as a single-stage, solid propellant missile.

**¶7.** (U) COMMENT: India has demonstrated its continuing keen interest in developing a functioning MD system capable of defending itself from possible Pakistan or Chinese hostile missile attacks. Yet Pakistan is pushing forward with deployment of a ground hugging cruise missile which can reach India within minutes, against which India,s current MD system is entirely inadequate. Indian contacts tell us they are interested in continuing low-level exchanges on MD concepts, and would welcome any technology anyone would be willing to give away, but operationally these tests show that India is interested in developing its own indigenous capabilities.

Minor Demonstration Against Pakistani High Commission

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**¶8.** (SBU) An obscure Indian leftist political organization

held a small march and demonstration in New Delhi,s diplomatic enclave on December 4 to protest President Musharraf,s administration and US engagement with Pakistan. Delhi police informed RSO that approximately 30-40 people identifying themselves as the "Bangladesh-Bharat(India)-Pakistan People,s Forum" (BBPPF) marched to the Pakistani High Commission at 11:00am to deliver a prepared political memo. After going to the Pakistani High Commission, the demonstrators wished to submit a copy of the memo to the U.S. Embassy but police admitted only two persons to submit it in person, which was received by RSO and a copy given to POL section. The memo accuses President Musharraf of subverting democracy and oppressing the Pakistani people and accuses the USG of being the puppet master of Pakistani politics. The address and telephone number on the pamphlet is that of Mr. Debabrata Biswas, leftist Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament, West Bengal. The BBPPF has been in existence for approximately two years, and has enjoyed the public support of Mulayam Singh Yadav and his Samajwadi Party. There was no violence, traffic disturbance or other problems reported in relation to the demonstration.

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